

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is submitted in response to the Final Office Action mailed January 3, 2003 and an Advisory Action dated July 8, 2003, to request reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 17, 20, and 28 as set forth therein.

In the Final Official Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1, 9, 20, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,777,406 to Bomba et al. (hereinafter "Bomba") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,488,532 to Endress et al. (hereinafter "Endress"). Additionally, the Examiner rejects claims 2, 16, and 17 as unpatentable over Bomba and Endress and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,800,174 to Butterfield et al. (hereinafter "Butterfield"). Furthermore, the Examiner rejects claims 4, 5, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bomba and Endress and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,728,840 to Newhouse (hereinafter "Newhouse"). Still further, the Examiner rejects claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bomba and Endress and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,629,628 to Rank et al. (hereinafter "Rank"). Lastly, the Examiner rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bomba and Endress and further in view Rank and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,980,650 to Belt et al. (hereinafter "Belt").

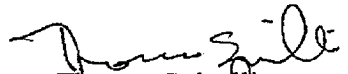
In response, claims 1-3, 22-26 and 28 have been canceled and claims 4-21 have been amended to depend from claim 27, which has been indicated as allowable by the Examiner.

Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 17, 20, and 28 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

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The above remarks establish the patentable nature of all the claims currently in this case. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance and passage to issue of these claims are therefore respectfully solicited. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorney would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas Spinelli
Registration No. 39,533

Scully, Scott, Murphy & Presser
400 Garden City Plaza
Garden City, New York 11530
(516) 742-4343
TS/cm

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